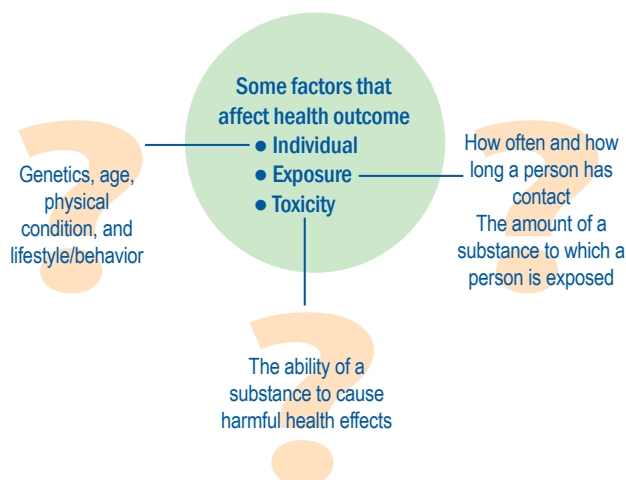
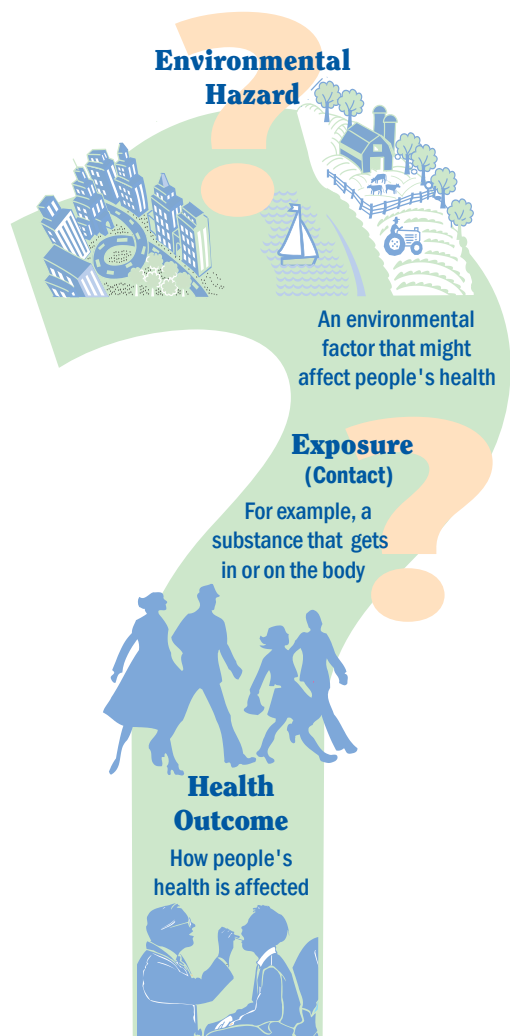


# New York State

## Environmental Public Health Tracking



EPHT is a new program that focuses on learning more about important patterns and trends in environmental health.

By reviewing how hazards, exposures, and diseases change over time or across regions of the state, questions can be generated about whether those trends are meaningful. These questions, or their answers, may direct future research, public health interventions, or other activities that might prevent or control environmentally-related health problems. Exploring these trends also might help us to improve the types of data collected, how data are managed and how we share data with other agencies and data users.

### About New York State's Environmental Public Health Tracking Project

The New York State Department of Health received a grant from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct environmental public health tracking projects. CDC awarded grants to state and local health departments around the country as well as three schools of public health. The School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University is the academic center assigned to assist New York programs. New York City is also doing its own EPHT project.

CDC's goal is to develop a national environmental public health tracking network. The eventual goal would be to have all public health systems be able to share data and analyze trends across the nation.

# EPHT COMPONENTS

## Evaluating Data Sets

Our ability to track environmental hazards, exposures, and health effects is directly related to the quality and completeness of our data sets. By evaluating environmental and health outcome databases, we can determine what enhancements are needed. We can also identify additional data needs and assess the feasibility of filling data gaps. This evaluation includes a review of our current databases and identification of actions to improve them. We are looking at the content, format, and design of data systems, and the extent to which they are compatible.

Both the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the State Health Department are responsible for managing and developing environmental and public health information systems. As a part of the EPHT project, a data exchange system is being developed by these agencies to automate the secure exchange of health and environmental data. This system will provide data about environmental hazards, exposures, and health effects throughout New York State over time. This system provides real-time data to support joint decision making, professional collaboration, and rapid flow of information between public health and environmental agencies.

## Identifying Patterns, Clusters and Trends

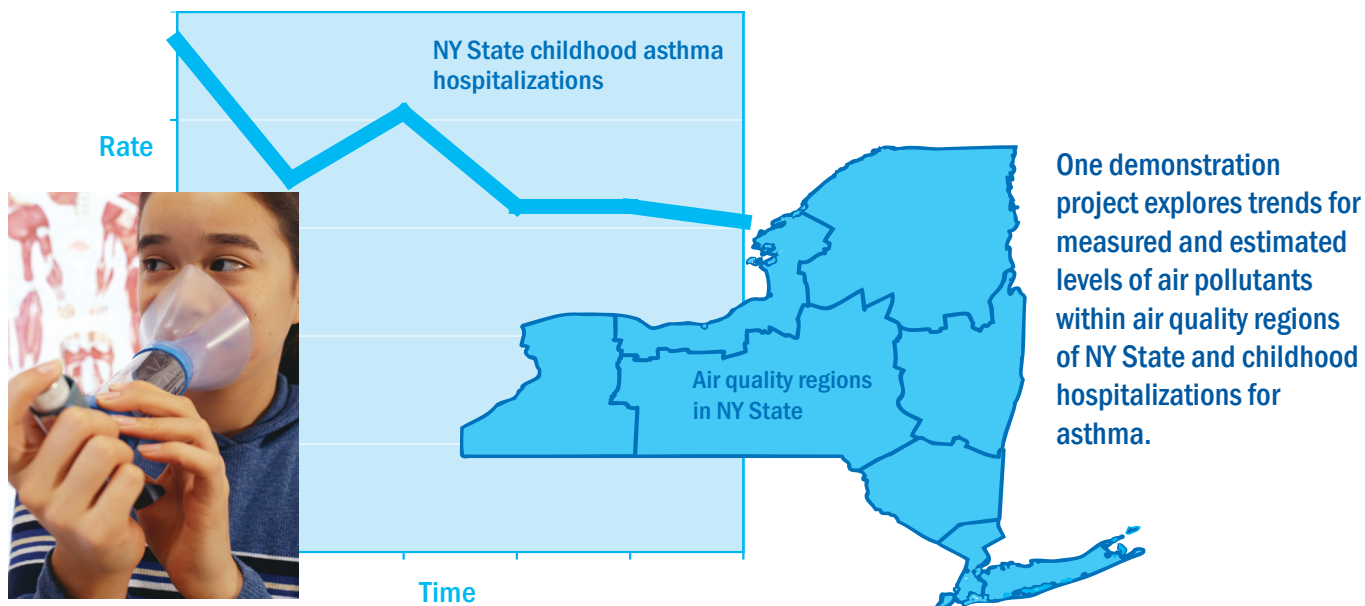
The New York State Department of Health is conducting two demonstration projects. These projects are “test runs” of our ability to link environmental and health data sets and to identify patterns, clusters, or trends. They were designed to help address an important State Health Department goal: enhancing our capability to track the public health significance of environmental exposures (air pollution and drinking water contaminants) to children.

These demonstration projects have two main components: surveillance and epidemiologic investigation. For example, as part of our surveillance efforts for the air quality and childhood asthma demonstration project, we will look for geographic and temporal patterns of asthma hospitalizations and air pollution levels. An epidemiologic investigation will look at possible effects of air pollution on childhood asthma, birth outcomes, and mortality. For the second demonstration project, surveillance and epidemiologic methods will be used to investigate patterns of birth outcomes and levels of contaminants in drinking water.

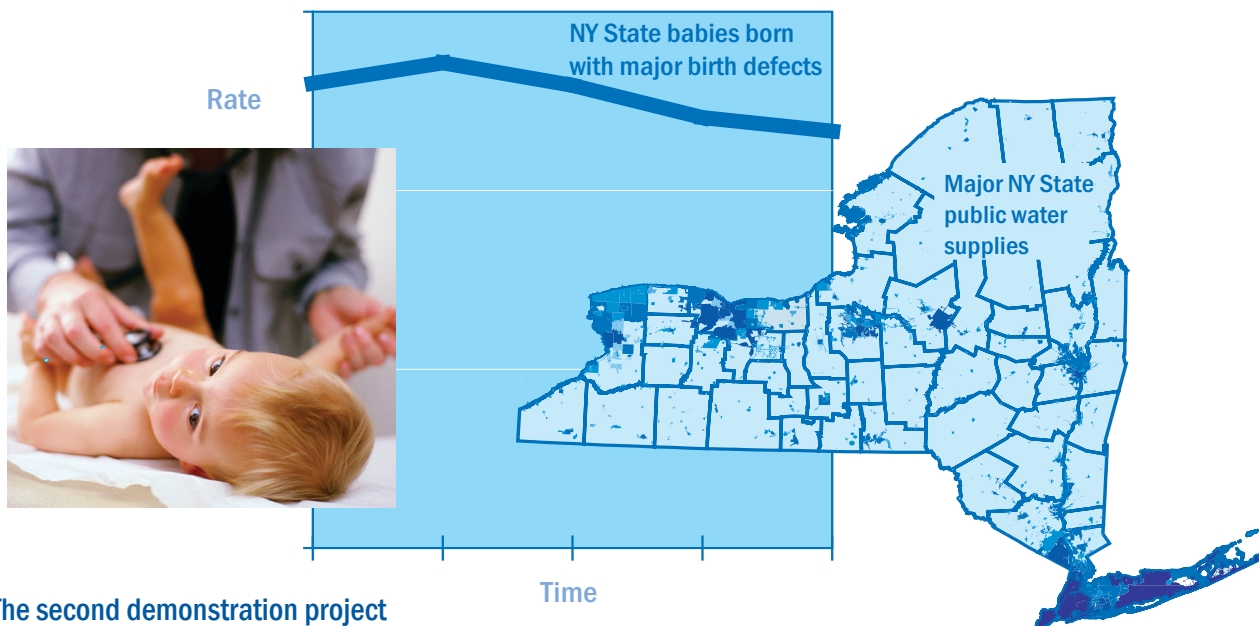
With these projects, we hope to learn more about how to link environmental and health data to explore possible relationships between environmental hazards and health effects. What we learn through these demonstration projects will help to improve our ability to track other environmental exposures and possibly related health outcomes.

# Highlights of the New York State Project

## Air Quality and Childhood Asthma Demonstration Project



## Drinking Water and Birth Outcomes Demonstration Project



## Who Are Our EPHT Partners?

EPHT is a multidisciplinary partnership program. Teams have been formed that include epidemiologists, toxicologists, information technology specialists, environmental scientists, statisticians, educators, and others from New York State Department of Health, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the University at Albany's School of Public Health.

CDC and other federal agencies such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency are providing data, technical guidance, and assistance. Johns Hopkins University is developing courses and other training materials to enhance the skills and expertise of staff in areas relevant to EPHT. These partnerships are key to the success of the EPHT program.

A number of key people are also participating in a workgroup that provides advice and recommendations about the planning and execution of the EPHT program. This workgroup includes individuals representing community and advocacy groups, as well as academics, and professionals with a wide range of experience and expertise. It has provided input on many of the technical aspects of the program. Members also provide advice on strategies for outreach and communication.

## Where Can I Get More Information?

New York State Department of Health  
Center for Environmental Health  
EPHT Project  
1-800-458-1158, extension 27950

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Environmental Health  
1-888-232-6789  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking>  
EHHEinq@cdc.gov

Johns Hopkins University  
Center for Excellence in Environmental Tracking  
<http://www.jhsph.edu/EPHTcenter/index.html>

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Bureau of Environmental Disease Prevention  
253 Broadway, 12th Floor, Box CN58  
New York, NY 10007



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